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HOPKINS, T. S.

On nitric acid in the  
treatment of asthma. 1850

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*On Nitric Acid in the Treatment of Asthma.* By T. S. HOPKINS, M. D., Waynesville, Geo. Since the spring of 1847, I have prescribed nitric acid in seven cases of asthma, with the most satisfactory and gratifying results. I was led to prescribe the acid in consequence of its accidental administration to a child, suffering from asthma, under the treatment of a highly esteemed medical friend in an adjoining county. The child rapidly recovered. He informed me of the fact, and I determined to test its virtues when an opportunity offered. In a disease of such Protean form, resisting, as it often does, the best directed treatment of those who have grown gray in the pursuit of our time-honored profession, I deemed experiment justifiable, particularly when it could result in no harm to the patient. As to its *modus operandi*, in the cure of asthma, I have nothing to say at present. I submit the question to those who have a better knowledge of the pathological condition existing in that disease, than I profess to have. My knowledge of the efficacy of the remedy, is based upon facts, which I feel assured will convey to the mind of any one who may be disposed to give it a trial, the most incontestable proofs of its *decided* utility. I send you the following cases, with their history, as collected from the patient himself, the parent or the master. Cases 1st and 7th were attacked with asthma, on being removed to the "low lands," the one being free of the disease during a period of two years, the other twelve months. Could this be considered a *relapse*, or was it not *asthma*, produced, in these cases, by those causes, which would have caused the disease in those who had never labored under it before; such as a humid atmosphere, with exposure to heavy fogs, walking bare-footed upon wet, low ground during the day, and sleeping with cold, wet feet at night.

CASE I.—Emma, negro girl, aged seven years, belonging to

Mr. T. G., had been asthmatic for the last three years. At night she suffered much from dyspnœa and cough. Slept but little. During the day, there was an amelioration of her sufferings, though she was never entirely clear of *dyspnœa*.

I ordered five drops of nitric acid, three times daily, in a wineglass of sweetened water. I did not see her again until a half ounce had been taken. Every symptom of the disease had disappeared. I saw this patient in January, 1848. She continued well, until the last winter, when she had a return of asthma, which lasted a few days. Since that time, she has shown no symptoms of the disease. A short time previous to the last attack, she had been removed to a *low* swamp plantation.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*       \*

CASE V.—W——, aged seven years, son of an estimable friend and planter. This was the most severe case I had ever seen. The nightly paroxysms of dyspnœa and cough were most alarming and distressing, frequently threatening immediate suffocation. He had been treated by the most skillful physicians, in vain. I freely and unhesitatingly expressed my doubts as to my ability in relieving this case. The acid, in doses of five drops, was prescribed three times daily. In a week there was a decided improvement. In a month he was *cured*. Two years have elapsed, and he continues *well*. The father of this boy died during the summer of '49, of phthisis pulmonalis. His mother presents the symptoms of incipient tubercle, and his brothers and sisters, without exception, have been the subjects of ulcerated sore throat.

CASE VI.—Mrs. C——, aged fifty, a resident of middle Georgia. She spent the summer in this place, when I was called to see her. Fifteen years ago, she had hydrothorax, from which she suffered long, and came near dying. She, however, slowly recovered, and after a few years' interval of apparent good health, she was attacked with asthma. The attacks were periodical, lasting about a week, and were distressingly severe. She had tried a little of everything. I recommended the acid, in doses of ten drops, three times daily. Immediately after, she left for her home, and I heard nothing of her until a month since, when I received through a friend and relative of her's, the gratifying intelligence that the remedy had put a speedy stop to her sufferings, and she was then well.

CASE VII was a negro woman, some fifty or sixty years

of age, belonging to Mr. R. H. She had been asthmatic for many years. The usual remedies had been administered in vain. I prescribed the acid, as in case VI. I prescribed for this case twelve months ago, and heard nothing of her until during the past week, when Mr. H. informed me that she was speedily, and as he thought permanently relieved, under my prescription; but upon removing her to the low lands, a few weeks since, she was exposed to a shower of rain, and the disease returned.—*The Charleston Medical Journal and Review*, Nov. 1850.

*To the Medical Profession.*—The undersigned, chairman of the standing committee on *Practical Medicine*, appointed by the American Medical Association, May, 1850, respectfully solicits the co-operation of members of the Medical Profession in furnishing materials for the Annual Report in May, 1851. The duty of this committee, as defined by the constitution of the Association, is to “prepare an annual report on the more important improvements effected in this country in the management of individual diseases; and on the progress of epidemics; referring, as occasion requires, to medical topography, and to the character of prevailing diseases in special localities, or in the United States generally, during the term of their service.” In order to fulfill the objects thus expressed, the requisite data must be supplied by medical practitioners in different sections of the Union. This is more particularly true with reference to the “*progress of epidemics*” and “*the character of prevailing diseases in special localities.*” Communications, therefore, are particularly desired from persons residing in places in which epidemics have prevailed, or in which prevailing diseases have been marked by special characters during the present year. Epidemic cholera, and dysentery, are known to have prevailed more or less extensively in different parts of the country during the past summer. Facts bearing upon the features peculiar to the present season, the production, diffusion, mortality, treatment, &c., of these diseases, will be acceptable. It is requested that communications upon these or any of the subjects coming under the cognizance of the committee, be transmitted to the undersigned by the first of March, 1851.

All contributions with which the committee may be favored, will receive due attention and acknowledgment.

AUSTIN FLINT.

BUFFALO, *New York*, Nov. 1850.

[*Buffalo Medical Journal*, Nov. 1850.]



# METEOROLOGICAL REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER, 1850.

At BURLINGTON, NEW JERSEY—Lat. 40° N.—Long. 75° 12' W.—Alt. of Bar. above Delaware River, 20 feet.

1550.	Barometer.				Thermometer.				Clearness of Sky.				The Wind.				Clouds.				REMARKS.
	Sun-rise.		P.M.		Sun-rise.		P.M.		Sun-rise.		P.M.		Sun-rise.		P.M.		Sun-rise.		P.M.		
	9	3	9	P.M.	9	3	9	P.M.	9	3	9	P.M.	9	3	9	P.M.	9	3	9	P.M.	
Sept.																					
1	29.70	29.70	29.73	74	74	81	74	74	5	5			SE3	SE3	SE3		5	5	10	10	1st. Very close air. Showery.
2	29.74	29.74	29.74	76	74	74	72	72	9	10	10	10	NW2	SE1	S		10	10			2d. Rain. Unusually high freshet.
3	29.73	29.77	29.77	68	78	78	68	68	10	10	10	10	Calm	Calm	SE		2	2	10	10	4th. Slight fog.
4	29.77	29.77	29.74	61	79	80	72	72	8	10	10	10	Calm.	SW3	Calm.		2	10			5th. Lightning.
5	29.70	29.66	29.66	65	80	82	78	78	8	10	10	10	W	NW2	NW3		10	10	10	10	7th. Heavy fog. Heavy rain, began at 8 A. M., continued all day till 9 P. M.
6	29.66	29.74	29.73	70	82	74	71	71	8	10	8	8	SW4	W5	W2		2	2	10	10	
7	29.74	29.73	29.62	70	74	76	70	70	8	10	8	8	N1	Calm.	Calm.		2	2	10	10	
8	29.49	29.64	29.69	70	76	72	68	68	8	10	8	8	Calm.	Calm.	Calm.		9	5	1	1	
9	29.79	29.50	29.75	58	72	64	64	64	1	9	9	9	Calm.	SW3	W3		9	5	1	1	
10	29.75	29.72	29.70	62	74	66	60	60	10	10	9	9	NW2	NW3	NW3		1	1	1	1	
11	29.68	29.68	29.68	60	74	66	60	60	10	10	9	9	N2	W3	W		2	7			
12	29.77	29.77	29.77	52	65	60	60	60	10	10	10	10	W	W	W		2	7			
13	29.73	29.73	29.73	52	66	62	60	60	8	10	10	10	NW	Calm.	N		5	5			
14	29.73	29.70	29.70	50	68	62	60	60	5	10	10	10	NW	NE2	N		5	5			
15	29.70	29.70	29.70	50	68	60	58	58	10	10	10	10	NW	NW	NW		10	5	10	10	
16	29.70	29.76	29.75	53	69	63	58	58	10	10	10	10	NW	N	Calm.		10	5	2		
17	29.76	29.73	29.70	53	66	60	55	55	10	10	10	10	Calm.	S3	S		10	5	2		
18	29.66	29.58	29.54	50	66	60	55	55	5	10	8	8	Calm.	W3	NW		10	1			
19	20.43	29.40	29.42	62	75	62	62	62	10	9	10	10	W	W3	NW		10	1			
20	20.50	29.50	29.60	55	76	62	62	62	10	10	10	10	N2	NW	NW		10	1			
21	20.50	29.50	29.60	55	78	64	64	64	10	10	10	10	N	SE2	Calm.		10	1			
22	20.70	29.50	29.79	54	77	64	64	64	10	10	10	10	Calm.	NW	NW		10	1			
23	20.80	29.80	29.80	51	78	51	51	51	10	9	9	9	Calm.	S3	S1		8	1			
24	20.80	29.80	29.76	51	78	51	51	51	2	10	1	1	SE	Calm.	Calm.		8	1			
25	20.73	29.63	29.60	62	81	71	71	71	10	10	8	8	NW3	NW	NW		10	2	4	4	
26	20.62	29.64	29.60	64	76	67	66	66	10	8	6	6	NW	NW	SW0		10	4	10	10	26th. Heavy thunder storm, with an uncommonly large fall of rain, began at 9, continued till noon.
27	20.54	29.53	29.50	64	72	66	62	62	10	8	6	6	NE	SSE	SW0		10	4	10	10	27th. Rain began at 2, continued till 5 A. M. At 8 P. M. a violent thunder storm passed over us from the west, with heavy rain.
28	20.45	29.40	29.30	63	76	62	62	62	10	10	10	10	W3	W3	W3		10	1			
29	20.42	29.43	29.45	64	74	60	60	60	10	10	10	10	W3	W3	W3		10	1			
30	20.52	29.68	29.64	56	62	50	50	50	10	9	10	10	W3	W3	W3		10	1			
31	20.55	29.68	29.56	43	60	54	54	54	10	10	10	10	W3	W1	W		1				

20th. Heavy thunder storm, with an uncommonly large fall of rain, began at 9, continued till noon.  
 27th. Rain began at 2, continued till 5 A.M. At 8 P.M. a violent thunder storm passed over as from the west, with heavy rain.  
 The force of the wind is estimated in numbers, 0 being a calm, 1 a very gentle breeze, 2 a gentle breeze, 3 a fresh breeze, 4 a strong wind, 5 a very strong wind, 6 a violent storm, &c. The numbers are put after the course—thus, for example, if the wind is from the S.W. strong, it is set down SW4. In clearness of the sky, 0 represents entire cloudiness, 10 entire clearness. The Velocity of the Clouds from 1 to 10 also.

Accession no.

Author Hopkins:  
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